

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



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Empowering Local Districts to Set Priorities: WSP Redefines Focus for Officers to Build on Successes

Beginning July 1, 2005 the Washington State Patrol, continuing to build on its current successes, is redefining the focus and mission for the employees of the Field Operations Bureau. The Field Operations Bureau includes those who patrol the over 17,000 miles of highways in Washington State. This focus, according to WSP Chief John R. Batiste, takes the bureau to the heart and core of quality law enforcement.

The redefined mission will consist of four elements: Traffic Law Enforcement, Criminal Interdiction, Collision Investigation, and Roadside Assistance. This empowers each district to set enforcement priorities within their own communities. This enforcement may include aggressive driving, seat belts, speeding and DUI but may include other priorities as well.

These priorities were determined from gaining community input, and based on collision data in each location. For example: District 2, Bellevue area, will include enforcement of HOV violators in their district enforcement priorities. Other districts are considering emphasis on following too closely, and work zones as law enforcement priorities.

Chief Batiste said: "What is important is saving lives, reducing collisions and removing criminals from our roadways. This focus encourages officers to take all aspects of their job into account."

"We expect officers to look beyond the license plate," Assistant Chief Brian Ursino added.

The Commercial Vehicle Division will also focus on the four elements listed, in addition to enforcement of size, weight and load regulations, safety inspections and reducing collisions through focusing on the interaction of cars around commercial vehicles.

"We hope by providing this type of flexibility, that each district will be able to impact issues that are unique to them," said Chief Batiste. "This focus will enable us to continue to impact the quality of life for Washington citizens, while still being the best law enforcement entity in the nation."

Please contact your local PIO to find out what enforcement priorities are in your community. The contact information can be found on our Web site at the following URL:
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/newsfags/pio.htm>.

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